Hannibal Pride One-Shots

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Hannibal Pride One-Shots

by TheCosmicPebble

Summary

A collection of Hannibal pride one-shots for the best month ;)

(Sexual things are in the tags because that’s coming up later!)

June 2- Lesbian

"Mylimasis. Darling."

Hannibal gently rapped on the dining table with his knuckles, startling Will out of drifting off. He'd been immersed in a book, head propped on his palm, and the later it got the harder it was to stay awake.

"You're falling asleep." Hannibal gave another anxious glance out the kitchen window. "She's not back yet."

Will stifled a yawn. "She'll be back. I used to cut it close to curfew, too." He looked up at the clock: approaching eleven. "It's not that late. I'm just old."

Hannibal opened his mouth, looking like he wanted to say something else, but he was cut off by a voice outside.

"No way! Your house is so cute!"

Will laughed. "See?"

The voices tampered down, and Will shifted towards Hannibal so he could see out the curtains as well. They both hid behind the fabric; she couldn't see them, but they could see her.

Abigail and her friend, a blonde girl, stood chatting on the front porch. A pair of car headlights lingered outside the house, luckily belonging to the girl who was dropping her off. They both wore smiles as they exchanged goodbyes.

Will reached over and took Hannibal's hand. "Nothing to worry about."

Hannibal coaxed him out of his chair and put an arm around him. Will relaxed, breathing in the scent of pine. He closed his eyes, so sleepy and so content.

"Will."

His eyes popped open again. Hannibal never used his name anymore. It was always darling, dear, beloved. He followed his gaze out the window.

Abigail and the girl were kissing passionately. Abigail had her hand in the girl's curly hair, stroking it in a way that reminded Will of Hannibal.

"Huh." Will blinked. "Look at that."

Finally, the two girls broke apart, beaming. As Abigail's friend walked away, their arms stretched in an attempt to hold hands for as long as possible. Abigail took a deep breath as she watched the girl get into her car, and finally she turned to enter the house. Will scrambled back into his chair and made sure the curtains were completely closed.

Abigail jolted at the sight of them. "..Hey," she said. "Didn't know you guys would still be up."

"We wanted to make sure you got back safe," Hannibal replied. "Did you have fun?"

"Oh, yeah. Yeah. We had a good time." She still seemed flustered from the kiss. "Logan thinks the house is cute."

Will smiled. He'd put a lot of work into the landscaping, plus he'd fixed up the cottage's old shutters and scraped the cobblestone to make it look charmingly old, not run-down. "Nothing about it being in the middle of nowhere?"

Abigail shrugged. "It's not that far out. Or she just..didn't want to say anything." She ran her fingers through her newly dyed hair, auburn with gleams of orange, and shed her fake glasses. "I'm going to bed."

"Abigail?"

Hannibal squeezed his shoulder as a warning. Abigail turned on her heel, inches from the stairs. She waited expectantly for Will's question, the one that now he didn't want to ask.

"..We love you," Will said. Abigail blinked, and she finally melted into a soft smile. She came back and wrapped her arms around the two men.

"Love you guys," she murmured into Hannibal's shirt. "Thanks."

After a blissful moment, they all broke free, and Abigail went upstairs. The men waited to hear her door close.

"She'll tell us when she wants to," Hannibal whispered, leaning down and kissing Will's neck. "Like fathers, like daughter, I suppose."

Will frowned. "She'll never be like her father. Or like us."

They had tried so hard to keep Abigail safe. After she'd stabbed Nick Boyle, and Hannibal had offered to cover the whole thing up, she stuck to her innocence. She refused to lie, refused to keep the secret; that in itself was rather admirable to Hannibal. Both he and Will had worked through many sleepless nights to have the killing ruled as self-defense, and eventually it had worked. They'd taken Abigail out for a milkshake, laughed in disbelief about what they were able to accomplish. Jack never left her tail, though, and she was constantly under scrutiny for helping her father with the killings.

And then, months later, they kidnapped her. At least, that's what the FBI thought.

After months of deception, Will couldn't deny that he'd accidentally fallen in love. He was willing to risk everything, even it if meant seeing someone he loved get killed. He wanted to go with Hannibal, even though it meant leaving Abigail behind. In the office, when Hannibal offered a better way, a more peaceful way...

We could disappear now. Tonight.

Will had to take it. And when Hannibal took him home, there was Abigail, in tears, begging to come with them too. Hannibal seemingly hadn't expected her, either— he looked at her with wide eyes before enveloping her in his arms, nodding in agreement. Will had joined in, taking Abigail's hand and holding it firmly. She squeezed it.

Will never let go of her hand until they stepped into their new cottage, halfway across the world.

She had wanted to go. But it was easier to pretend she was a victim, because that meant she could avoid punishment if they were caught.

"You seem..upset," Will remarked, catching Hannibal's expression. It was one of nervousness, almost disappointment. "I hope you haven't become a homophobe all of a sudden. We'll have some issues."

"I don't want her to get hurt." Hannibal sighed.

"She won't get hurt. Not on your watch." He yawned.

"You're clearly exhausted." Hannibal helped him up. "Let's go, baby."

Will followed him into their bedroom. They were already in comfy clothes, so they climbed under the covers and turned out the lamp.

"I love you." Hannibal kissed his forehead. "Oh, I love you..so much. With all of my heart."

"I love you." Will drifted off, smiling.

At some point during the night, when the room was still dark, he awoke with the feeling of eyes on him. Hannibal's warm arms were still circling him, but Will was facing away from him now. All of the dogs were asleep. He raised his head and nearly jumped out of his skin.

There was a shadow looming over his bed.

He gasped and quickly flicked on the lamp, revealing a surprised Abigail. She blinked in the sudden light, and he felt Hannibal stir against his back. "Abby.." Hannibal mumbled.

Will rubbed his eye. "Did you throw up?" He asked, not without sarcasm.

"I can't sleep."

Hannibal wordlessly threw back the covers and moved over. Abigail squeezed between the two of them, and Hannibal brushed her long hair with his fingers. Will flushed. Hannibal was always more apt in fatherhood than he was, thanks to Mischa. Will always wondered if he was doing a good enough job for Abigail.

Will turned out the lamp again, leaving all three of them in the dark.

"Are you okay?" He asked Abigail, who was facing him.

"Can I tell you guys something? And you won't get mad?"

"It's hard to make Will mad," Hannibal mumbled, groggy. He was braiding Abigail's red hair now— he never could sit still. "He fell in love with me."

Will couldn't help but chuckle. "What he said."

"I..I like girls. Instead of boys. And I think I have a girlfriend."

"We're mad. Your gay dads are really mad."

"It's not that. I just..I know I shouldn't draw attention to us. Shouldn't get to know people."

"We never said that. We want you to be happy."

"I don't want them to find us." Her voice cracked. "I don't want them to take us away."

She sniffed. Hannibal kissed the crown of her head and shushed her gently.

"You're not a criminal, Abigail. You have never been a criminal," Will reassured her.

"I don't care about that. I just don't want to be alone." She wiped her face. "You guys take care of me. You love me. You're my dads!"

Please! Please, I can hardly leave my house anymore. I'm so alone. You're the only people that treat me right!

"We'll always take care of you, okay? You mean the world to us."

"It's not fair. It's not fair that I get to be free and you don't. I'm supposed to go to college. Have a job, live a life. I can do all of that, but I can't have you guys at the same time. It's not fair!"

"You are always free to escape alone, so to speak," Hannibal said. "You can say you got away from us. Hell, tell Jack Crawford that we're dead. Then your life will carry on, and you can visit us wherever we go next."

"But..out there, I'm Abigail Hobbs. I don't want to be her anymore. People have made up their minds about me, and none of it is good."

"You don't have to return, then. We can forge documents. You have a new name. A new life is still in store for you." Hannibal finished with her braids and slung them over her shoulders. Will stared at them— he'd done a good job.

Abigail fiddled with them. "Am I a burden to you guys?"

Both men objected so forcefully that they spoke over each other, shaking their heads. Hannibal hugged her from behind. Abigail laughed.

"I am grateful every day that you've come along with us," Hannibal told her.

"Me, too. I was going to miss you so much." Will hugged her, too. "Besides, if you hadn't come, you wouldn't have met your girlfriend."

"Right. Yeah. I think I have a girlfriend." She kicked her legs a little, excited.

"I wish to cater the wedding," Hannibal said.

"Which one walks you down the aisle? Should it be both?"

"Guys, stop!" Abigail hid her face.

"Are we required to wear white along with you? Because white does not suit me."

"Can Winston come?" The dog at the end of the bed perked his ears up at his name.

"I'm leaving. I'm going back upstairs."

"Nope." Will and Hannibal both leaned in, holding her. "Trapped."

Abigail didn't protest.

Will caught her smiling before they all finally fell back to sleep.

Day 3 and 5– Bisexual and Pansexual

Chapter Summary

T4T Hannigram where Will is bi and Hannibal is pan :)

"You're trans."

Hannibal stood over Will's hospital bed, the thermos in his hand. After watching Will get loaded into the ambulance and transported to a room, after seeing Will shirtless and catching a glimpse of those unmistakable scars, he knew that they had to discuss it. He'd brought a meal to lighten the mood a bit.

Will opened his mouth, taken aback. He crossed his arms over his chest.

"I— I'm sorry?" He asked, blinking.

"You're transgender."

Will watched him for a moment, defensive, before letting his shoulders fall. "Yes," he finally admitted. "Yes, I'm trans."

"Do you wish to talk about that?"

"Not really."

"Alright." He held up the thermos. "I brought you a meal. A welcome break from what they give you here."

The sudden topic change stunned Will even more, but before any more protests could be made, they were already becoming immersed in another conversation. They returned to business, and it was never brought up again. There was too much else to talk about.

Many months later, at Mason Verger's farm, Will finally got an explanation for Hannibal's nonchalance.

"Well, well, what have we here?" Mason circled around Hannibal, whose hands were bound and his shirt ripped off. His breasts, never operated on, immediately caught the eyes of Mason and his men. "Our feisty boar turned out to be a sow! Who knew?"

"Hannibal?" Will asked, shock in his breathy voice. "You're.."

Hannibal ground his teeth, raising his head to spit in Mason's face. The men grabbed him by the hair and rubbed his face into the hay, stomping on his back and crushing his breasts

against the ground. He winced in pain, but he would never let the men see it.

There was a moment of respite, when the men let up and some of them walked away. Hannibal kept his eyes squeezed shut, trying not to convey any emotion. He couldn't give them the satisfaction.

"Do you know what we do to the prized Verger pigs?" Mason asked, amusement in his voice. There was the sound of metal, the smell of charcoal, Hannibal's throat burning with the acrid stench. He didn't move.

"No. No! Stop!" Will began to shout desperately. Hannibal's heart stopped— what, he thought, could be so terrible that Will is screaming for—

A circle of metal pressed right against the scar on his upper back, right where he'd had the skin removed for his surgery. While it had scarred over the years, the patch was still fragile, more tender than the rest of him, and before he could even register what was about to happen, he was burning.

It was an unbearable heat, eating into his flesh like a parasite. He could hear the sizzle as his skin cooked underneath him, the brand pressing hard into him. The smell of rotten meat assaulted him, and he retched as he realized it was his own body, smoking like meat on a skillet.

He couldn't help himself. He screamed.

He screamed until his throat was hoarse. Blood rushed to his face, tears running down his cheeks. It was the most pain he'd ever felt. His entire body throbbed with heat and agony, and once the brand was finally torn away from him he collapsed onto his side, the hay scratching his skin and drawing blood.

"You're mine now, Lecter," Mason said.

"You're sick," Will spat. Hannibal couldn't hear much— the ringing in his ears was too loud. He was ruined. He was exhausted. He was branded.

"Such a shame she'll die before she can foster some offspring." Mason smirked, waving his hand dismissively as the mob dragged Hannibal down to his deathbed.

Well, that didn't turn out as they'd planned. Sows can be deadly too. And they have just enough strength to carry their lovers across state lines, apparently. The duty of bringing Will home was more important than his pain.

He set Will on his mattress and made sure he was comfortable, letting the dogs surround him. He got in Will's shower and let freezing cold water run down his back, relaxing for the first time in what felt like months.

When Will finally woke up in his bed, the familiar words were the first thing out of his mouth.

"You're trans."

"Yes."

And then Will rejected him. All of that, and Will tossed him aside.

But he forgave Will. He would always forgive Will, just like Will would always forgive him. They always ignored the worst in each other in order to enjoy the best.

Now, they had finally reached Hannibal's cliff side house, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. They took in the sight of the waves rolling over the sharp rocks, and eventually Hannibal led them inside.

"Here," he said, "why don't we both change?"

Will glanced down at his blood-soaked clothes, drenched from the bodies in the car crash. He nodded. "..Sure. Yeah."

In the bedroom, Hannibal looked forward to finally shedding the uncomfortable scrubs, to finally be rid of the filth. Anything other than luxury was unthinkable at this point. Luckily, this house was always prepared, always ready to live in just in case he needed an escape. It was surely paying off now— nice clothes in the closet, nice china in the kitchen, a wine cellar.

He handed Will a button-down and nice pants, comfortable but not too stuffy, along with boxers and socks. Will took them, mumbling a thanks.

"Excuse me. This needs to be fixed now." Hannibal undid the Velcro on his jumpsuit, ripping it open and pulling his arms out of the sleeves. He stepped out and threw the outfit to the floor like it was something rotten, dead and not worthy of his sight. That left him with nothing but boxers; he didn't realize how truly naked he was until he turned his head and caught Will staring at him.

Will's eyes were curious, drawn to Hannibal's chest. His breasts. The lack of scars. His nipples, much more rounded and pink than the average man's.

"Shit," Will said, "I almost forgot.." He stepped closer. "You're trans, too. God, I forgot."

"I'm glad I pass that well." He smirked.

Will gave a small smile back. "You never had the surgery."

"My doctor recommended that I didn't have it. They are so small that it could have been dangerous."

"You got lucky."

"I wouldn't say so. They didn't develop properly because I was so malnourished as a child."

Will winced. "Wow. I'm sorry."

He shrugged. "I'm well-fed now, aren't I? It worked in my favor, I suppose."

Will hesitated for a moment before reaching out and placing his hand on Hannibal's chest, right over his sternum. He moved his fingers through the hair on Hannibal's chest, licking his lips.

"Will?"

"Did you change your name to rhyme with 'cannibal' before or after the whole 'eating people' thing?" He smiled with his teeth, eyes crinkling, a rarity now from him.

Hannibal laughed. "I suppose that would have been rather clever of me, hm?"

They both chuckled for a second. Will's hand traveled upwards to Hannibal's shoulder.

"No, it was long before. I was a young man when I began taking testosterone— I started right at the age when it became allowed. I decided on a name that was much more common in my culture: Hannibal, meaning 'one whom Baal has favored. Baal is the God of fortune."

"You wanted good fortune upon your life."

"I already had the misfortune of being born female. I figured I needed some luck."

"You sure did get some." Will shook his head with bewilderment. "God, did you get lucky. All these years.."

"Or I was very good at hiding my crimes."

"That, too." Will moved up some more, resting his palm on the back of Hannibal's neck. "Not good enough for me, though."

"I chose to share with you. I figured you would understand. But evidently, you weren't ready yet."

"No, I wasn't."

He leaned close, his lips brushing against Hannibal's ear. "But I'm ready now."

Hannibal felt his mouth begin to water, and before he could respond Will was pushing his neck forward and their lips touched.

Hannibal sank into the kiss, bringing up his own arms to hold Will against him. Will's tongue pressed against his lips, and Hannibal let him in. He got a good taste of Will, a taste that he'd been craving for years.

Will began to unbutton his old shirt, throwing it to the floor. Hannibal glanced at his scars, at the completely flat chest that he occasionally envied. He was too careful about his body, though, to risk the danger.

He'd been so busy staring that he hadn't noticed Will taking his pants off. He returned his palm to Hannibal's chest, kissing him and pushing their bodies onto the bed.

Will was an adventurous kisser. His hands traveled with such fervor that Hannibal felt tingles all over his body. Those warm palms caressed his hips, his breasts, his thighs. Will shifted and kissed him on the neck, taking Hannibal's fragile skin in his teeth.

"Goodness, Will."

“You have a.. a beautiful body.” Will's hands were lingering by Hannibal's boxers. "You had the bottom, right?"

"Yes."

"So I was right. That Mason.."

"He branded my scar. Burned the skin there, yes. Likely on purpose."

"Jesus."

"I'm alright now. I'm more than alright."

"Can I see it?"

"Of course."

Will pulled down the waistband, exposing the results of Hannibal's surgery. He stared at it with admiration and hunger.

"I could never afford this," he breathed. "It looks so good."

"Thank my surgeon, I suppose. We shall find you a good one."

Will froze. "We.."

"Are we still not part of a we yet? Do you still plan to go back to another fake home?"

"No. No, not at all." He shook his head. "It's just..you put it so easily. And I've never been a we."

"Not with Molly?"

"She and I were together. There was never a we."

"I see."

"You'd really help me have the surgery?"

"It's first on my list of priorities. Behind fake identities, disguises, getting on a plane, making sure my home in Europe is still habitable, blending in—"

Will cut him off with a kiss. Hannibal melted.

"Are you dysphoric? Are there words I cannot use?" Will whispered against him.

"Nothing in particular. Don't call me a woman. Girl. Whatever you choose, don't do that."

"You're pretty." He cupped Hannibal's cheek in his palm. "Can I say that?"

"Of course."

"You're pretty." He kissed Hannibal's cheek.

"You're beautiful. You are like a piece of artwork. I've always thought that."

"Thank you." Hannibal caught in his tone that this was a thank you for many things. For freeing him, for showing him how wonderful he could feel. It meant much more than any other thank you.

“Your body is magnificent, Will. I do hope you’ll let me see more of it.”

“I don’t have what you have.”

“What’s down there does not matter. It is merely anatomy to me. What matters is the feeling. The pleasure, the love.” He traced Will’s stomach scar with his finger. He didn’t have to look— he’d memorized its path a long time ago. “I think nothing of gender.”

“I just know I like men and women equally. I don’t know much else.”

“You don’t have to know.”

“When Margot found out, she was halfway through trying to seduce me. Then she found out I didn’t have anything to give, and,” he shrugged, “she went to some other man. I still don’t know who he was.”

“I don’t, either. She was toying with both of us. She was watching us toy with each other.”

"Hey," Will said softly, "I'm done. I'm done being...what we were. Manipulation. Mind games. Whatever we were doing. Can we be done?" His eyes were earnest. While anyone else would see lack of eye contact as a sign of deception, it was the opposite for Will. Eye contact from Will was rare but intense. He had gotten into the habit of looking people straight in the eye when he lied, like it was a social cue that he had to build up.

"We're done, Will." Hannibal kissed his throat, feeling his Adam's apple under his lips. "We're finished. From now on..there is only this."

"Yes." Will sighed. "Yes."

They kissed, they touched, they melded into each other with intimacy. When they were finished, eyes half-lidded and bodies sore, they held each other and slept until the sun set.

June 9- Demisexual

Chapter Notes

I COMPLETELY FORGOT TO POST THIS ONE!!! HERE'S DEMISEXUAL WILL

"It's cold. Do you have any whiskey?"

Margot Verger sure was bold. She was sharp, golden; she burned your throat and warmed your stomach. She was just like whiskey. It was only fitting, Will thought, that it was her drink of choice.

She downed two shots before their conversation even started. Will simply watched her, slightly amused. She leaned forward on the kitchen table and rubbed her forehead with her palm. Will's dogs all sat in the living room, watching warily. When Margot had seen them, she didn't look surprised.

"To what do I owe the pleasure?" Will asked. Looking at her designer trench coat and her scarf that was likely real fur, he felt out of place in his T-shirt and boxers. He wore only socks.

"You're a patient of Doctor Lecter, right?"

It was not the conversation he wanted to have. "Yes, I am. I'm assuming you are as well?"

"Has he ever said anything...I don't know. Concerning? Weird? Unprofessional?"

Will smirked. "At least three times a day, yeah. But unprofessional sounds slimy. Is he being gross?"

"No, no, nothing like that. He's not that kind of person."

"Okay, good."

"He's not like my brother."

That sent them into an uncomfortable silence for a moment. Margot ran her finger around the rim of her shot glass. There was a shimmer of gloss on the rim where she'd sipped it.

"When you were arrested," she finally said, "when they thought you were a killer, did that have anything to do with him?"

Will considered his words carefully. "If it did, then I wouldn't still be his patient, wouldn't I?"

"You still could be. If you're particularly foolish."

"I guess I'm a real idiot, then."

Margot narrowed her eyes. "So it does have to do with him?"

"Yeah. Why do you ask?"

"My brother..my brother has hurt me. Very badly. And I tried to hurt him back. I failed, miserably, but Doctor Lecter.."

"He wants you to try again."

She tensed. "How did you know?"

"When I shot Garrett Jacob Hobbs, he..he toyed with me. He tried to convince me that I enjoyed it. That I was..I was just like him."

He couldn't tell her the whole truth. He couldn't tell her about the needles in his arms, how he sometimes awoke screaming at night. He couldn't talk about the light, swishing back and forth, Hannibal's voice lulling him into sleep before his whole body began to twitch, like his brain was short-circuiting—

He couldn't talk about his dreams. The demon standing over him, tall and black with thick antlers, climbing into his bed and pressing its weight down on top of him. Stroking his hair, its breath against Will's face. It smelled like blood. He couldn't talk about how, when he finally escaped those dreams, he would wake to an odd feeling between his legs. He would shower after with the water so hot that his skin turned pink.

"Will?"

He snapped out of his thoughts, realizing that his hands were trembling.

"I wonder if my brain will ever be the same again."

"Because of him?"

"The encephalitis. My brain cooking inside my skull."

"Do you think Lecter knew?"

"I know he did. I know that for a fact."

"Shit." She gripped her glass tightly. "Shit. Do we need to go to the police?"

"I tried. The entire time I was in jail, I tried. It didn't do anything."

But it's being taken care of, he wanted to say. It'll be okay. Soon I'll— we'll— be out of this nightmare.

He couldn't talk about that.

There was a lot he couldn't talk about. He was really struggling to keep up the conversation.

Will's house was dark, save for the warm lamps that lit the corners of the kitchen. Margot's face looked sharply defined in the orange light.

"There's a lot of shit you're not telling me," she said. She wouldn't look at him.

"I could say the same for you."

She frowned. Then she took off her coat. Then her sweater.

She wore a sleeveless undershirt, almost like a tank top, and when she turned Will could see the scars that lined her back and shoulders.

"Oh," was all he could say. "Margot..who did this?"

"My brother."

"God." He shook his head. "I guess it's my turn to ask: do we need to call the police?"

"On a white male millionaire?"

"Right. Right. Shit." He would never know the injustice. He wasn't a woman.

"This is why I listen to Doctor Lecter," she told him. "I let him tell me about how it would feel to kill my brother. I'm interested. I'm swayed."

"He has that way about him. It's exactly how he gets you." He scooted his chair closer. "He reels you in, polite and insightful and honest. He empathizes with your plight. He wants to help you. You become intrigued, and then interested, and then persuaded."

He took Margot's hand before he could stop himself. "Don't fall for it. I've gone way too deep, Margot. When he wants something, he gets it— and now every single thought is about him. I can't stop. Every waking moment is Hannibal, Hannibal, Hannibal, and then I dream of him. He wanted me to be like this."

Margot listened, her eyes glistening with intrigue. "Why does he want that?"

Will sighed. "In his words? He only wants what's best for me. And what's best for me, in his opinion, is a life where I have absolutely no one except for him."

He glanced down at Margot's forearms. The fine hairs on them had risen, her skin covered in goosebumps. "He's obsessed with you."

"And I'm obsessed with him. Against my will."

"Maybe this will help," she whispered.

While his eyes were averted, Margot leaned in and kissed him. Will let out a small cry of surprise, but her soft lips and whiskey-tinted breath sent him into a stupor. They were both drunk. They were both afraid.

She was a good kisser. Her little breaths in between made Will feel warm. She ran her hand through Will's hair.

For one wonderful second, he wasn't thinking of Hannibal.

"I want you," Margot whispered.

Will didn't register the words until her fingers were playing with the waistband of his boxers. Shocked, he pushed himself away, chair legs shrieking across the wooden floor.

Margot stared at him, completely bewildered.

"What are you doing?" She asked.

"What are you doing? I'm not— we're not—"

"What? We're not what?"

"I don't know you! I don't know you at all."

"Since when do you have to know me?"

"Since..ever?"

"Good God."

"Are you just having sex with people you don't know?"

"Ever heard of a one night stand, Will? Prostitutes? Tinder?"

"That's normal? I always thought..those people were desperate, or something. Do people have sex with strangers?"

"All the time. Literally all the time. You're not making any sense."

"Where's the fun in that? Where's the love?"

Margot let out a bitter laugh. "Sex doesn't always mean love, kid. Women especially get that."

"To me, it does." Will frowned. "Can you not treat me like a freak?"

"I don't think my brother did what he did because he loved me."

Will felt a pang of guilt in his chest. He glanced at her scars again. "Jesus Christ, Margot.."

It made him want to retch. The thought was disgusting. Absolutely abhorrent. He didn't blame Margot for wanting Mason dead.

"I'm so sorry."

"I'm tired of it being my only trait. I'm trying to be more than my brother's..victim."

She sighed. She put her head in her hands, a long bout of silence stretching between them.

"So...do you never have sex?"

"I have sex!" He was so defensive that Margot laughed a little. "I have sex with people I know. I trust."

"You don't trust me?"

"We're strangers, Margot. And I know there's some shit you're not telling me, either."

Margot didn't say anything. She just shook her head.

"Why did you come here?"

She hesitated. "To ask about Hannibal."

"Okay. You did. And you're done."

"I wanted someone to understand. To tell me that I wasn't crazy."

"You're not crazy. I promise you. Hannibal is a real threat."

"I know that now."

Will sighed. "Mason told me you're a lesbian."

You're not here for Margot, are you? She's out riding right now. Besides, she sadly doesn't play for your team. I know, I hate it too. Real downer for the Verger lineage.

Margot turned stiff, closing her eyes and gritting her teeth. "He what," she said, deadpan and scarily calm.

"It was a snide little comment. And he's a professional liar, so I'm taking it with a grain of salt. But it really has me thinking about how badly you 'want' me."

"Fuck you. You're a—"

"What do you really want, Margot? Because I don't think I can give it to you."

"I've had enough." She stood abruptly, swaying. She leaned against the table. "I'm not gonna sit here and take this shit."

"Whoa, wait. Hold on." He stood as well, taking her shoulders to steady her. "I don't want you to drive like this."

"Don't touch me!" Margot snapped, jerking away. Will stepped back and put his hands up.

"Margot," he said calmly, "I'm not going to try to force you one way or the other. But you came a long way to get here. It's freezing outside. Your car is probably freezing. It's dark, and you've been drinking. I would prefer that you don't try to go back home."

"I didn't come here planning to go back the same night."

"You came to stay the night?"

"You're supposed to have sex with me. You're supposed to.." She groaned. "I need this!"

"I'm not gonna have sex with you. And I'm especially not doing it when you're this upset." He grabbed the bottle of whiskey and put it back in the kitchen cabinet, noticing Margot's hungry stare as he did so. "It's not happening. I'm offering for you to stay here. I don't have a guest bedroom, but you can have my bed—"

She gave him a once-over. "I'd rather not have your bed."

"The couch, then. There's a throw blanket on it. Pillows. It should be long enough."

She didn't answer for a long while, staring at the floor. Her brow was furrowed in frustration and indecision.

"..Fine," she finally caved. "Just because I can't go home right now."

Will nodded, glad to end the conversation. He fixed her a glass of water, prepping some pillows on the couch and making sure she was comfortable. Duke, his massive Rottweiler, settled near the head of the couch, and Margot placed her hand on his head.

"He can stay in here," Will said, but it was unnecessary. Duke had already made his place there. "Everything okay?"

"..Yeah. Thanks."

"Sleep all you need to. I'll make you coffee. We'll talk, okay?" He turned off the lamp on the side table. The room plunged into darkness.

"Sure." She sounded uncertain, but Will didn't think much of it. She just needed to rest.

"I'm in my room if you need me."

"Will?"

He stopped in the doorway.

"So you have to really know someone. Would..would you let Hannibal touch you?"

He had no idea where the question came from or why she would ask it. The words were a subconscious trigger for him, his stomach began to flip and he felt something sharp digging into the crook of his elbow, and he wanted to double over and shriek no no no—

"No," he replied with all of the calmness he could muster, "I wouldn't. Because Hannibal doesn't love me, and I don't love him."

"Hm." She thought. He couldn't see her in the dark. "At least one of those things is a lie. I don't know which one— I don't think you know which one. But at least one of those statements isn't true."

He heard her turn over on the couch and let out a loud sigh. Shocked, confused, it took him a moment to get the hint that she wanted him gone.

"Goodnight, Margot."

He closed the door to his room, settled in his own bed, and shut his sleepy eyes.

He didn't know how much time had passed when he awoke to the sound of breathing at the food of his bed. He assumed it was Margot, and he tried to sit up and look.

But he couldn't move. He couldn't move a muscle, not a single centimeter. His limbs were cemented to the mattress, and panic shot through him. He couldn't even slip out a scream from his throat.

Light footsteps trailed over to the side of the bed, and out of the corner of his eye Will could make out the stag, its horns blocking his view of the ceiling. Will's lip quivered.

Its lungs rattled as it breathed, and through the noise Will could make out his name. He gasped— it never spoke. He didn't think it could.

It climbed into the bed with him. He could feel the pressure of its body as it lay down on top of Will, its rough hands brushing back Will's hair. It leaned down, closer and closer, until Will was enveloped by the blackness.

The sounds of the forest surrounded him. He could see nothing, but the creature's breathing was still audible. Every inhale was the chirping of birds, the chattering of crickets, and every exhale was the rustling of the trees. He felt an undeniable sense of peace come over him.

It whispered his name again, and Will's body moved as if he was possessed. It wasn't his body anymore; he didn't decide when to move, the creature did.

His body curled up against the creature, leaning into it. Its skin was cool and felt like tree bark. It held him, and he slept.

When he woke in the morning, he had that same uncomfortable feeling between his legs. Margot was gone. The only evidence left of her presence was the lone shot glass, dried lip gloss on the rim.

June 10– Asexual

Will's stomach flipped as the taxi rolled to a stop in front of the cottage. He took a deep breath, closing his eyes for a second behind his sunglasses and adjusting his hat.

"Merci," he said to the driver, handing over an exorbitant sum of cash— much more than the driver had requested. "Je n'ai jamais été ici." He could thank his childhood in Louisiana for teaching him Creole and French. "D'accord?"

The driver paused, but then he shrugged his shoulders and took the money, his eyes widening as he saw how much it really was.

"D'accord."

He took off the second Will closed the trunk, and Will sighed in relief as he realized that he would quickly be forgotten about. Or at least once all of that cash was gone, spent on cigars and black coffee.

He headed towards the front door of the cottage. His entire life was stuffed into the one suitcase he carried. He paused outside the front door, knowing that the man inside was already watching him. It was chilly outside, the sun beginning to set in Paris.

He knocked.

The man, slightly taller than him and with a pair of spectacles balanced on his nose, opened the front door after a good thirty seconds. He smiled politely at Will, swinging the door open wider.

"Timothy, my friend," he welcomed Will with a handshake, "come in. Please."

Will followed, the door closed behind them, and finally the two of them were alone. Will reached for his sunglasses.

"May I?" He asked, quirking a sarcastic eyebrow.

The man reached up and took Will's glasses by the corner of the frame, lifting them off of his face. He stared lovingly into Will's blue eyes.

Will did the same for Hannibal, pulling the fake glasses from his nose. They beamed at each other, their bodies sagging as they sighed in relief.

Will yanked his hat off and threw it on the floor, and then he leapt into Hannibal's arms. His legs wrapped around Hannibal's waist, and Hannibal held him up, strong as always. He held onto Hannibal with a firmness that he hoped conveyed his message well enough: *I missed you. Don't ever let go of me again*.

They had been travelling alone for the past few days, each of them taking a separate route towards France. Hannibal went the faster route, finally entering the cottage that he'd purchased months ago. Will knew that his journey would take a bit longer, but he couldn't predict delayed flights and the horrible endeavor he went through to find a taxi. It had made his yearning all the more desperate. He wanted to be home, and here, inhaling the scent of pine and Hannibal's cologne, he knew he was there.

"My love." Hannibal buried his face in Will's shoulder, kissing his neck. "Oh, my love, I was so worried. I thought I'd lost you."

"I know. It all got delayed, and I couldn't reach you. I'm sorry. But I'm here now. I made it." Will got back down on the ground and kissed Hannibal's cheek. "I love you."

"I love you, Will. I love you so much."

They laughed into each other's hair, and Will knew he would never be afraid again.

He relaxed in Hannibal's grip, leaning against him. "We did it."

"If I saw you every day, forever—"

"I would remember this time." Will sighed happily, pressing his forehead against Hannibal's. He loved that sentiment; Hannibal always said it with so much adoration in his tone. It has become their tradition. "I'm so tired."

"I'm sure you are. We can go to bed early, if you wish, but I want to get some food in you. Oh, I've missed you so much, my love."

Will smiled at the protectiveness. Of course Hannibal was already wanting to take care of him. "I thought about you the entire time. As if I could make you materialize right there beside me. This is..I feel even better than I expected."

"That, Will, is freedom." He grinned. The corners of his eyes crinkled. "We're free!"

Will laughed. He had never seen Hannibal this relaxed, this happy. The formal walls that he'd built up around himself were all demolished, and now there was only this man, this curious, powerful, dashing man that Will wanted to spend the rest of his life with— and even after that.

"I got us a gift." Hannibal turned to a small dining table in the middle of the kitchen. It was a small wooden circle with two chairs, situated right in front of a window. On top of it was a basket, filled with fresh loaves of bread and fruit and champagne. Hannibal took out the bottle, popping the cork and filling two thin glasses with the golden drink. Will giggled as he took his glass, the bubbles fizzing right under his nose.

He sat down and watched Hannibal bustle around the kitchen for a minute, popping grapes from the basket into his mouth. Hannibal had a circle of fresh brie, which he stuck into the oven to melt. Will's mouth watered at the savory scent; he'd had nothing to eat since that

morning, some cheap coffee shop pastry that made him realize he was way too spoiled for fast food now. He didn't mind. He liked to be pampered.

They enjoyed their dinner together. They ripped apart the bread with their hands and dipped it in the fresh brie, they shared grapes and chopped apples and clinked their champagne glasses together. It felt like such a communal meal, something that brought them together even more than they already were. They laughed over stories of their travels.

It was probably the best meal Will had ever had in his life.

After, when the sun had finally set outside their window and they were sipping on coffee with biscuits, he caught Hannibal staring at him. He smirked, looking at him expectantly.

"You look so beautiful right now," Hannibal said. "The lamp is hitting your face just right. Your eyes...you were born with the ocean in your eyes, Will. It's no wonder that the ocean was where you were eventually reborn, as well. You're the most beautiful man I've ever seen."

Will blushed. "I appreciate that. I'm glad you think so."

"It's not an opinion, it's a fact." Hannibal leaned closer and reached across the table, cupping Will's cheek in his palm. "You're lovely."

Will turned his head and kissed Hannibal's palm. Even from this distance, Hannibal's sharp nose caught the scent of coffee on Will's breath.

Will stood up. He put his hands on the armrests of Hannibal's chair, whirling it around to face him, and then he straddled Hannibal's legs and sat on his lap. Now it was Hannibal's turn to blush.

"Will—"

Will kissed him passionately on the lips, his arms draped across Hannibal's shoulders. Hannibal sank into it, licking up the drops of coffee left on Will's upper lip. He ran his fingers through Will's curls. He absorbed this man with beautiful turquoise eyes and lips that tasted like mocha. He absorbed where they were, how they'd escaped everything that had held them back, and now there was only happiness.

He had to tell Will. There was only one more hidden truth, and now was the proper time.

"Will," he whispered into his lover's mouth, pulling his head back. "I need to tell you something."

"Yes?" Will sounded almost dazed.

"What are your thoughts on sex?"

"Can we avoid it tonight? I'm exhausted."

"I mean in general."

Will smiled, clearly confused. "Um..I like it. And I'd like to have sex with you, if you'd be up for it. At some point."

"Then you should know that I consider myself an asexual person."

"Oh." Will sounded interested now, straightening up, still sitting comfortably on Hannibal's thighs. "I'm not too sure what that is."

"I don't experience sexual attraction."

"You've had sex with people before, though. With Alana." Will frowned.

"Yes, I have. But I felt no attraction to her."

"You didn't feel anything at all? You didn't think she was...sexy? Or that you felt sexually drawn to her?"

"No. I typically never do."

"Then why do it?"

"It made her trust me. It gave me an alibi." He hesitated. "It made you jealous."

To his delight, Will cracked a smile. "You're devious," he remarked, leaning in to kiss Hannibal on the forehead.

"I don't find sex disgusting, or anything like that. I sometimes have the craving for pleasure. But I don't experience sexual attraction to anyone." He thought. "To me, sex is a means to an end. It's always been that way. And when you see it as something obligatory, a bribe, a motive...you tend to not enjoy it as much. In my opinion, there are better, more intimate ways to love."

"We don't have to have sex, love."

"This doesn't mean that we will never have sex. It just means I experience no attraction." He rubbed Will's back. "There will be some moments where I feel alright with it. And when that happens, I will let you do whatever you please. But I don't think that I will ever be the instigator. I just wanted you to know that, in case you started to doubt my love for you."

"Okay." Will nodded, understanding slowly dawning in his eyes. "Okay. Thank you for telling me that."

"There should be no doubt at all, though, that I love you." Hannibal laced their fingers together. "I hope you know that."

"Of course." Will kissed his temple, lips lingering by his ear. "Hannibal," he whispered, sending chills through Hannibal's body, "can you show me how you love? Those better, more intimate ways?"

"Yes." Hannibal's response was minuscule, a mere breath, but they both heard it with how close they were. "Yes."

He eased Will off of his lap and switched off the kitchen lights. From there, he took Will into their bedroom, sitting him down on the mattress.

"I reserve the right to fall asleep," Will murmured, his lips turning up. Hannibal began to unbutton Will's shirt, and then did the same for his own.

"You can either get naked, or you can stay in your boxers. Whichever you are comfortable with."

"I've never been truly naked around you before." Will fiddled with his belt, dropping it to the floor along with his pants and underwear. Soon they were both naked, taking each other in.

There was only one lamp on in the room, and Hannibal turned it off before climbing in bed with Will. Gently, he pushed down on Will's shoulders until he was on his back, Hannibal kneeling over him.

There were so many fragile parts of the human body that were not discussed enough. Those parts were Hannibal's favorites, and he wanted to explore every one of them on Will.

He kissed Will's throat, hands running through Will's hair. He kissed the inside of his wrist. He traced the middle of his chest, towards the heart where he could feel Will's ribs converging. The soft skin under his belly button, Hannibal felt under his lips. That was when Will let out his first moan.

Hannibal placed his hands on Will's muscled thighs, gently opening his legs. He left a trail of kisses down his inner thighs, down the sensitive V where his legs met his pelvis. Another soft noise of pleasure, and he felt Will becoming hard right against his cheek. He licked the tip, and Will cried out with ecstasy.

He used one hand to stroke Will's cock while the other continued down. He felt around Will's thighs, the underside of his knee, caressed the calloused skin of his heel.

Finally, he brought that hand back up to feel Will's heartbeat. It was beating rapidly against his ribs, and Hannibal liked that he was the cause of it. He let go of Will's cock.

"No.." Will squirmed. "I'm not done yet.."

"I know. Sit up."

Will obeyed, and Hannibal climbed onto his lap. He held Will as he thrust their hips together, Will's cock brushing against his own. They flowed together seamlessly. Their thighs worked in tandem as they were grinding against each other. Hannibal could feel the sheen of sweat forming on Will's back.

And then a new wetness, this one unfamiliar yet obvious. Will let out a loud sigh, collapsing against Hannibal's body.

"I love you," he breathed. "I love you."

"You are my muse." Hannibal spoke with a calming rhythm, kissing Will between each sentence. "A piece of art. A statue to be revered for centuries, my love. You're untouchable. You're perfect."

He slowly lay them both down as he spoke, working their bodies under the covers. Will listened with half-closed eyes.

"You're everything I've ever wanted," Hannibal told him. "Please, never doubt that. You mean the world to me."

Will nuzzled into his embrace. "I love you."

He was asleep in what felt like mere seconds. Hannibal brushed the wet hair off of his sweat-soaked forehead.

"Goodnight, my beloved."

Day 14- Trans FTM

The first sign that something was wrong was when Will didn't want Hannibal to see him shirtless.

It was the day of his visit to the neurologist, when Will realized that he would have to take his shirt off for the scan. He'd glanced nervously over at Hannibal, stammering out excuses about how he felt odd undressing in front of his therapist. It had hurt Hannibal a tiny bit, but it wasn't enough to cause suspicion— he'd just figured there were some scars he didn't want Hannibal to see. That, or he had a little bit of a belly on him he was embarrassed about. Hannibal had complied, as he always did, but he couldn't help but wonder.

It was quickly forgotten about, as fate made their lives much more interesting. He'd seen Will in hospital gowns, button-ups that were bloodied and torn at the shoulder, and ruined suits, but never, never shirtless.

The second sign that something was wrong was after Will's admission to Baltimore State Hospital. Hannibal had seen a wide array of emotions from Will, real and fake, and so he knew how to pinpoint which ones were genuine. His little stunt in prison in front of Alana was fake. The tears in his eyes during one of Hannibal's visits, however, were not.

Hannibal had snuck up on him, visiting at an off hour, so these tears weren't for show. Will had frantically tried to hide them, but it wasn't worth the trouble. When Hannibal inquired, Will told the truth— Chilton had been holding a medicine from him that he needed. He wouldn't specify the type, and Hannibal didn't care to know; however, he considered it a gross injustice. He complained to Chilton immediately, refusing to let him get a word in, and Will didn't mention the issue again.

The third sign that something was wrong was Will's behavior surrounding his and Margot's baby. He never seemed to want to talk about it— which was normal, he'd just lost a child— but something seemed off about it. He avoided the topic not because it made him feel sad, but because it was clearly awkward. He would avoid eye contact more than usual when he spoke about the baby, while Margot would stare at Doctor Lecter with an unblinking defiance, as if daring him to question how things were. Will didn't want to discuss being a father. He never seemed all that excited about the prospect of having a child of his own.

It all came together once they were reborn.

Together they had slayed the Dragon, passionately ran their hands over each other's bodies, emerged from the ocean born anew and shared kisses on the way back up to the house, and Will was still refusing to take his shirt off. It had made Hannibal feel confused, betrayed.

"N-No. No.." He'd whimpered as Hannibal moved to slide the shirt off, trying to expose the large knife wound underneath. He weakly took Hannibal's hands and pushed them back down.

"Will, my dear.."

"I'll take care of it."

"You're bleeding. He stabbed you."

Will crossed his arms over his chest. "Please don't."

Despite Hannibal's protests, Will turned his back and began to slowly bandage his own wound. Hannibal placed a hand on his back.

"If you keep your back turned, can I do it then?"

Will paused. "..Yeah. Yeah, I guess."

Hannibal wasted no time. He slipped Will's shirt off and began to do what he'd done to his own wound— disinfect, wipe, bandage, done. Both of their wounds looked worse than they actually were, and there was a great relief that came with patching them up. The sting of the cleaner, the pressure of the bandages. It felt better.

Will sighed when Hannibal was done, and he reached his hand out for his shirt. Hannibal didn't hand it to him, and Will looked over his shoulder with a frustrated expression.

"Give it to me."

"Why are you doing this?"

"Give it to me." His voice cracked, and in that moment he had seemed so impossibly weak, so sad, that Hannibal knew better than to push the subject. He wanted things to be easy that night. He wanted to hold Will in his arms and have there be no argument.

"It's covered in blood. It's filthy. Here." He gave Will a clean towel to wrap around his torso. "I'll get you another."

Will snuggled into his arms that night, gently kissing his neck, almost as a reward for leaving it alone.

A few weeks later, once every wound had been layered with scar tissue, once they could move freely without pain, the two were safe in another country. The sun had just set, and they had been eyeing each other over dinner with a particular ferocity. Hannibal had turned his head for just a moment to grab a dish towel by the sink, and before he knew it Will was all over him. He pinned Hannibal against the counter, kissing him on the mouth like he was deprived of oxygen and had to steal Hannibal's breaths.

"I want you," he breathed between kisses. "I want you, Hannibal."

"My love." Hannibal took him by the hand.

Will was on his back in the bed now, his lips turning up into a smile as Hannibal kissed him. He was happy. So happy, in fact, that Hannibal wondered if he could just try...

The moment his hands brushed the bottom of Will's shirt, Will jolted. "No," he said. "Just this."

"We're going to kiss on the bed with our clothes on?"

Will looked surprised by the question. "That makes it sound really weird. I just don't want to be..naked."

"I could understand earlier, but now? Will, don't you see what we are? What we've done together? You and I are bonded now; there's no question about it. Do you not trust me? Do you still feel like you need to run from me?"

"No," he replied quickly. "No, I don't. I swear. Not after..all of this."

"Then I need you to tell me the truth." He gestured to himself. "I've shown you my body. Many times, in fact, though not always of my own free will. I want to see yours."

"You won't like my body."

"Don't say that. Don't you ever say that." He stroked Will's cheek with the back of his hand. "Please explain this to me. You know I love you."

Will sighed, his expression like that of a beaten dog. He'd never looked at Hannibal like that: like he was ashamed of himself.

"I'm scared that if you know what I look like, you won't want me anymore."

"Why would you think that?"

He shrugged. "Molly didn't."

"Your wife?"

"Ex." The word slipped out.

"Yes, thank you for clarifying that for me. That you're not still married while you're kissing me."

The quip did what Hannibal wanted it to do— Will laughed despite himself. "I threw my ring into the fucking ocean, dear."

"It'll make a lovely meal for some poor fish." Hannibal kissed Will's forehead. "Molly didn't want you?"

"It's not that she didn't want me. She just..found it weird. She didn't like that I'd hid some things from her. She didn't know what she'd signed up for. I guess I get that."

"I think the upsetting part for her was our intimacy. I don't think it was your body."

"I just..I don't know."

"But I would never think of you differently because of your body. I fell in love with you."

"You're the only person I can ever love. I don't want you to leave me."

"I would never."

Will hesitated. "You have to promise that—"

"I promise."

"You didn't even hear what I was gonna ask."

"I promise," Hannibal repeated. He kissed Will's neck and collarbone, breathing the words onto his warm skin. "I promise."

Will closed his eyes for a long while, letting his lover kiss him, before finally relenting. "Okay."

He moved to sit up, and Hannibal got off of him. They sat close together in the bed, and Hannibal felt his chest flutter as Will's hands moved to each and every button, moving down, down, down.

Oh, he was the picture of perfection.

His eyes were first drawn to Will's stomach, toned and paler than the rest of him. The beautiful scar that ran across his abdomen, puckered and white. The thin trail of hair near his navel, down past the waistband of his boxers. His beautiful hips, muscled and sturdy. Hannibal's eyes travelled up his body, his mouth watering, and then he came to a stop at Will's chest. It was flat, and there was a slightly tilted shape to his pectorals, unnoticeable unless you were really looking, and in the warm light of the bedside lamp Hannibal saw two thin, dark scars running underneath each of his nipples.

"Please say something," Will begged him, and Hannibal finally realized that he had been silent for a little too long.

"Your body is beautiful, my darling. Oh, you are so perfect.." He reached his hand out, hovering it near Will's chest. "Your scars? Is this what you were afraid to show me?"

"Yeah. I'm...I'm trans. Transgender. I was born..different." His eyes watered. "These are my scars. Please say something."

It was the last thing that Hannibal was expecting to hear. He looked upon Will with awe.

"When I was born, I was a female." The tears began to leak out. "But that wasn't right. I never felt like it was right. I hated myself. I hated my body. Sometimes I still do." He squeezed his eyes shut. "Say something, Hannibal."

"Will.." Hannibal went in to hug him. Will cried into his shoulder. "Oh, my goodness. You're so beautiful. You are magnificent, my love."

"No. You don't have to lie."

"Stop. Please." He stroked Will's hair. "Oh, beauty..this means so much to me, the fact that you've told me. It means so much."

"You had to know at some point."

"How come I never knew until now?"

"I didn't think it was that important." He sighed. "By the time we got comfortable enough, it was...I got sick. You started," he paused, "you started hurting me. And I didn't want you to use it against me. Manipulate me with it."

"God. No, no, no." He buried his face in Will's hair, turning red with embarrassment. "I never would have done that. I swear to you, that would be cruelty on another level, darling. I'm so sorry that you thought so low of me."

"You took advantage of every other weakness." He choked out a small sob. "Don't act like you didn't. Hell, I'd wager that you did worse."

"I'm so sorry." Hannibal had never been more ashamed in his life. He didn't know that shame was an emotion he was even capable of, let alone of this magnitude. "I'm so, so sorry."

"You know I forgive you. I'm not trying to make you feel guilty. I'm not blameless either. I'm just explaining why I never told you."

"If I had known back then, I never would have used it against you. Never. I promise."

"Does the past really matter now?"

"Chilton..does this tie back to your medicine?"

"My testosterone," Will replied. "He wouldn't give it to me. Said it was cosmetic. I stopped taking it recently, though— I've gotten all I need. Doctor said I was good."

"When you confided in me about Chilton, you knew there was a chance I would find out."

"I just wanted my body to feel like my own again." He sighed. "Margot's baby wasn't mine."

"Well, I assume so."

"I don't know whose baby it was. She pretended it was mine— I guess to manipulate you? Hurt me? I don't know. I really don't know."

"I'm so glad you felt good enough to tell me."

"The longer I went without taking my shirt off, the worse things would get. You had to know." He gave a soft smile that quickly slipped from his face. "I know it's not what you wanted to hear."

"Will, my God." Hannibal couldn't stop the little chuckle that escaped him. "Are you going to keep putting words in my mouth, darling? Why can't you accept what I'm saying?"

"Because I feel like..like a fraud." He began to shake. "I'm not a real man. I never will be."

"That is not true. Not a single bit of that is true."

"I don't even have.." He trailed off, devolving into sobs. Hannibal cradled him, softly shushing him. "I don't have a.."

"You did not have a bottom procedure?"

"No. No, I couldn't afford it. It was either the top or the bottom, and I had to do the top. Breasts made me feel worse. They were just too big.." He sniffed. "I don't have what you were expecting. You wanted someone with— with—"

"I wanted you! Physicality means so little compared to everything else, my dear. It's your heart, your mind, that I fell in love with. I mean, it helps that you're remarkably handsome." Will laughed. "But I wasn't thinking about your gender, your sexuality."

"You're alright with how I look? You're alright with me not being.."

"You are still the man I fell in love with." Hannibal kissed his forehead. "That is what matters. That is what matters. After all of this, you thought I would leave you because you don't have a penis?"

"I don't know what I thought."

"The truth is out now, and the world is intact."

"I'm trans, Hannibal. I'm transgender."

"And you're wonderful. This changes nothing, darling." He held Will's cheek in his hand and looked him in the eyes. "I have to ask you: did you want the bottom surgery?"

"If I could have done both, I would have. But I didn't have the money."

Hannibal nodded. "..I do."

Will's eyes widened for a second, but then his features fell back into resignation. "No, no, it's really expensive. I don't think—"

"I have my inheritance money stored away in a hidden account. It's tied to my new identity here; the names that we are under now are ones that I've always had prepared. You never know when things are going to fall out from under you. My point is, I've had plenty of money put away. We are not going to go broke."

"How much?"

Hannibal leaned closer and whispered the amount in his ear. Will gasped sharply.

"Oh, shit."

"Indeed." He put his hands on Will's shoulders. "Will," he said, "I am going to get you the surgery. We'll go as soon as possible. We'll go tomorrow if they'll take us, I don't care."

"No." He shook his head forcefully. "No, we can't. Surely all the press knows by now that I'm trans. It'll be on my record. It'll draw attention."

"They do not know our faces here. We are under different names. I have the makeup for good measure, as well— I can sculpt your beautiful face to look however you want it to." He smiled. "This surgery is going to be yours, Will. I'll make sure of it."

Will stared at him with disbelief. "You..you mean it?" There were tears swimming in his eyes. "You really mean it?"

"With all of my heart, beloved."

Will's lip quivered, and soon his whole face was crumpling as he began to cry again. Hannibal wrapped his arms around him, pulling him close and rocking him. He kissed the tears that ran down Will's cheeks, wiped them gently with his thumb.

"Thank you," Will cried. "Thank you!"

"No need. There's no need. I will help you in any way I can."

"I love you so much." Will kissed his lips.

"You have the most beautiful body I've ever seen, Will. I mean that with every shred of my soul."

"Thank you." Another kiss, this one longer and with more passion. They both fell back onto the mattress, kissing until they were both breathless and drifting into sleep.

"Let me help you. Please, let me help you."

Will chuckled. "Baby, I'm fine. I can walk; I'm not debilitated."

"I just— let me help you."

Will held out his arm with an exaggerated eye roll, and Hannibal linked their arms together. He helped Will out of bed and led them both towards the bathroom.

It had been weeks since Will had gotten his surgery. They had had to wait a few months before finally getting the procedure, as there were a lot of safety precautions to be done, but now the hard part was over. Will had done nothing but lay in bed, at Hannibal's insistence, and he had been through some rather embarrassing things— the catheter being the most noteworthy. He'd done everything he could to keep his groin covered. He didn't want to see it until all of the swelling had ceased, and he felt that now was finally the time.

"Now, there are things we can do if you don't like it," Hannibal assured him for what felt like the thousandth time. "I need you to be honest—"

"I'm sure I'll love it." He smiled. "At least, I hope I will— I've got a big chunk out of my back now. I gotta make sure it was worth it."

They reached the bathroom door, and Will stopped.

"..Can I have a moment?" He asked. "Alone?"

Hannibal hesitated before giving in. "Yes, of course. But you know that if you need me—"

"I know." Will leaned up to kiss him. "Don't worry."

He took a deep breath and opened the door.

At first, it struck him how many bandages were covering it all up. This would be his first time actually looking at it when the bandages were changed— normally Hannibal did it while he closed his eyes. He wanted to really be able to see it now.

Slowly, carefully, he removed all of the bandages before turning to the mirror with anticipation.

He let out a loud gasp.

Hannibal, standing right outside the door, immediately sprung to action. "Darling? Will, are you okay?"

"I'm okay."

"Do you need me to come in?"

"Oh, my God.."

"I'm coming in, okay?"

When he opened the door, he was met with a tearful Will. He deflated.

"You don't like it?" He asked. "Are you—"

"Hannibal." Will brought a hand up to his mouth. "Hannibal, it's so perfect. Oh, my God, it's so perfect."

Hannibal sighed loudly in relief. "I know, love. That's what I've been telling you." He smiled. "It looks so great, doesn't it?"

Will doubled over, covering his face. "Wow. Wow. I can't.." He inspected it again, tears running down his cheeks. "It's everything I've ever wanted!"

"And now you've got it." Hannibal pulled Will into his arms. Seeing Will like this made him want to cry. "I'm so happy for you, dear!"

"I'm so happy. I've never been more happy in my life. It looks so good!"

"Do you feel confident? Better?"

"I feel like myself. Finally." He shook his head. "Wow. Oh, my God."

"I'm so glad."

Will hugged him tightly. "Thank you." His voice was muffled by Hannibal's shirt as he kissed Hannibal's neck. "I love you. Thank you."

"You know that I will always love you." He kissed Will's cheek. "Now may I please get you back in bed? I'll fix you some soup."

Will grinned.

June 25- NonBinary

"You look miserable, darling."

Hannibal brought Will's hand up to his lips and kissed his knuckles. Will smiled at the touch, feeling a warmth blossom in his stomach.

"I'm fine," he replied. "I just don't really know what's going on."

Hannibal chuckled. "That's why I'm here to help you. I'm dying to get you some nice clothes."

Will glanced nervously around the store, which was dimly lit and rather small. Each piece of clothing was the only one of its kind, and they were all hung in such a way that none of them touched each other. The hangers were wooden and bulky, nothing like the plastic ones Will had used at home. The place smelled like linen.

"I feel really out of place."

"Let me pamper you, darling. Please? We'll find you something wonderful. We can't go on luxurious dates if you don't have luxury clothes."

Will relented. "Fine, fine. You lead the way, though."

Hannibal called out in Italian to the petite woman working the front desk. She looked up from the papers she was examining and came over, glancing back and forth between the two men as she and Hannibal carried a conversation in rapid Italian. Will kept his eyes on his husband, feeling a smile tug at his lips. Hearing him speak another language was so intriguing. His voice was deeper, smoother. It was crafted for romantic languages.

The woman was staring at him, now. He jolted back to reality and looked down at her as she patted his shoulders and waist. He stiffened at the touch. Her hands were small and her fingers were thin, and the unsolicited contact made him really uncomfortable.

She then looked into his eyes, and the expression on her face sent pure terror into him. It was curiosity, investigation. His skin felt icy all of a sudden, and he felt his stomach in his throat.

She knew. She knew who he was. She was investigating him, and she was going to call the police, and he was going to get arrested—

Hannibal seemed to notice the panic in his eyes, as he made a comment to the woman and she nodded along. She said something else before holding up her pointer finger and exploring the racks around them.

Hannibal led him over to a rack far away from the woman, pretending to browse the clothing. He took Will's hand in his, squeezing it tightly. He knew Will liked the pressure.

"She knows," Will whispered so quietly that he wondered if Hannibal could even hear him. "She knows. She's gonna call someone. She's probably doing it right now. They're going to kill us, and I'll never see you again—"

"Darling." Hannibal kissed his knuckles. "She was only commenting on your eyes. She wants to bring out the color."

"I wanted more time. I wasted all of this time, and I could have been with you years ago, and I should have said yes. I should have said yes.." He knew he was mumbling on and on, blurting out feelings that he didn't want to blurt out, but he couldn't stop himself.

This was too much. He didn't want any new clothes— his old clothes were comfortable enough. This store needed more light. It was too small. Why did it have to smell like linen; he hated linen, it hurt his nose, he wanted the comfort of home and the smell of Hannibal's favorite citrus-scented detergent. He wanted his dogs. He wanted the knowledge that no one would find him at home, no one in public could recognize him and call the police.

"Hey, hey..sweetheart." Hannibal held Will's face in his hands. "We can go. Let's go."

"No, no, I'm okay, I just," he let out a shaky breath, "this is a lot."

"I should have realized that. I'm sorry."

"You're trying to help me. I can make it." He forced a smile. "I need to get my wardrobe all..I don't know, spiffy?"

"I would be happy if I never heard you use the word 'spiffy' ever again."

"I'm not up to date on my rich lingo." Will sneered playfully at him. By now, the woman had approached them, beckoning them over to another section of the store. Hannibal kept hold of Will's hand as they followed.

She held up a navy suit, nicer than anything Will had ever worn. He couldn't help but feel nervous when he looked at it.

"I'll ruin it," he said. "I'll stain it, or wrinkle it, or something."

"No, you won't, darling. You should try it on." Hannibal gave him a soft smile, trying to encourage him. Will sighed to himself before reluctantly nodding his head.

The dressing rooms in the back of the store were better lit, and the smell wasn't as intrusive. It made Will's muscles relax a little.

"Hey." He came to a stop in front of one of the stalls, turning to face Hannibal. They were alone; the woman thankfully hadn't followed them. "I'm sorry, I—"

"Stop. There's no need."

"No, look. When I was a teenager, I was..I don't know. Borderline agoraphobic. I never wanted to leave the house. When I did, it was just this bombardment of sensory input, and it

scared the hell out of me. I think parts of that are coming back, little by little."

"Do you believe it's the stress caused by our situation?"

"Probably. I get so scared that everyone could recognize us." He lowered his voice. "And we'd never see each other again."

"I refuse to let that happen." He kissed Will's forehead. "We are different now, dear. Your hair is darker. You've grown your beard a bit more. Your glasses. My contacts. I've gone completely grey." He held up a strand of his hair and chuckled. Will smiled along, although he liked the grey a lot. He thought it made Hannibal look even prettier.

"The point is, we don't look like we used to," Hannibal said, "and that makes us less vulnerable. That, and the fact that those two men are dead."

Will nodded. Their supposed death was in the headlines for weeks. With the suicide note as well as the blood on the shoreline, a lone shoe lying on the sand, people were pretty inclined to believe that they had vowed to die together. Will wondered what Jack believed. If he ever truly accepted it, or if he simply went into retirement and decided it wasn't his business anymore. Even the most persistent men can give up with enough stress. Will knew that for certain.

"I love you," Will said to him. The words made Hannibal beam.

"I love you so much it's beyond words." He squeezed Will's hand again. "I should have known this would be too much, and I'm sorry. Thank you for being honest."

"I'll be okay." He shrugged.

"Try this on," Hannibal pushed the suit towards him, "and in a minute I'll tell you a secret of mine. How about that?"

Will raised an eyebrow. "Alright, I'll bite. Now I'm intrigued."

Hannibal merely winked at him and spun around, leaving him in the dressing rooms. Will swallowed and took the nearest stall, stripping down and trying on the suit. It was a full set, complete with a white button-down and a ruby red tie. He slipped everything on with care, trying to avoid any wrinkling. His eyes caught on the price tag, and he wanted to hurl.

He observed himself in the mirror, shocked by how much it really worked. The suit needed a few alterations to make it perfect, but right now it was pretty damn close. The color made his blue eyes pop, and the dark shade slimmed his figure. Not to mention how comfortable it was; normally suits felt suffocating, itchy, but this one was smooth.

He wasn't sure what the proper etiquette was. Was he allowed to step outside the dressing room with the suit on, or would the woman flip? Could exposing it to the wrong air be enough to make it combust? He rolled his eyes. It was one of the only times he was glad to have not grown up rich.

He turned the knob and stepped out into the aisle of stalls, which were all wide open save one. He racked his brain for Hannibal's fake name.

"..Matthias?" He finally called out.

"In here," Hannibal called from the one occupied stall. "Come on in. I'm trying something on."

Hannibal unlocked the door. Looking behind him to make sure the woman wasn't watching, he stepped inside, and when he turned around—

"Oh!"

Hannibal was wearing a dress.

It was a beautiful silk gown with a wide tulle skirt, and the material glistened in the light. It was ruby, the exact color of Will's tie. It looked stunning against Hannibal's olive skin, the off- shoulder sleeves accentuating his muscled shoulders. Will's heart fluttered.

Hannibal smiled. "Darling, you look lovely. That suit is perfect on you."

Wordlessly, without really knowing why, Will approached him and took hold of the zipper in the back of the dress. He zipped the dress up, completing the look for Hannibal.

"You're wearing a dress," he commented, his hand still placed on Hannibal's back.

"Do you like it? It's such a striking piece."

Will had never heard of an article of clothing being referred to as a "piece". Rich people were weird.

"It suits you."

"You think so? I love the color."

"It really does look great on you," he said. "Can I ask what prompted it, though?"

"I told you I'd give you a secret." Will gazed at the two of them in the mirror as Hannibal spoke. They complemented each other nicely. "I don't really know how to phrase it."

Hannibal was never at a loss for words. "Are you..are you considering transitioning? Like, into a woman?"

"Oh, no, no." Hannibal shook his head. "I am happy with the way that I am."

"Is your secret crossdressing?"

"No, darling. It's more than that." He twisted, examining the sides of the dress in the mirror. He looked ethereal in it, like royalty. "I..I'm not sure if I'm a man. Or a woman."

"Oh."

"I mean, I don't mind if people see me as a man. But..I don't see my gender as something that must be strictly adhered to. I don't see myself as being confined to a male role."

"So you feel, like, outside of the spectrum."

"Yes. Outside of the conventional ideas of gender." He smiled in the mirror. "I feel that if I confine myself to being a man, I miss out on some rather...enjoyable things. Like dresses. Jewelry."

"You can like those things and still be a man."

"But I'm not just a man, Will." Hannibal sighed. "I'll think of a better way to phrase it later. I'm going to go put this back."

"Wait, wait," Will interrupted as Hannibal began fiddling with the back of the dress. "I'm sorry. I want to get this. Help me get it right."

"The problem is that I don't think I understand it, either." Hannibal shrugged, the happiness from earlier now draining from his face. "How do I help you get it right when I can't get it right myself?"

"Do you feel uncomfortable with yourself? Do you not like your body?"

"My body is fine. I like myself," he reassured Will. "I sometimes feel out of place. I'm definitely not a woman, I know that. But when I think of myself as strictly a man..it feels limiting."

"So you're neither."

"I'm both. And neither. And something else. I really don't know, Will." He shook his head. "I don't like feeling uncertain about myself. I don't like not knowing myself."

"It's scary, isn't it? Not knowing who you are?" Will came behind him and rested his chin on Hannibal's shoulder, wrapping his hands around Hannibal's waist. Hannibal understood the tease, and he smirked.

"I know, I know. Now I get the struggle."

"I know who you are." Will kissed his cheek. "You're my person. My love."

"That, I'm very confident in." He turned his head to the side and kissed Will on the lips. They both smiled through it.

"You've put it a good way," Hannibal said. "Before I am a man or a woman, I am a person. I'm just," he lowered his voice so no one else could hear, whispering to Will, "I'm just Hannibal."

"That's how I'll always see you. My favorite person." Will straightened his posture and examined his suit once more. "We look good, don't we?"

Hannibal chuckled. "I don't need this."

"And I don't need this."

"You sure? All of your clothes are from thrift stores."

"And they work!"

"Not when we're going out to dinner. Not at the opera." He leaned close. "Not when we're married."

Will's heart pounded as he glanced down at their hands, silver rings shining on their fingers. He thought of the tiny imago carved on the inside of his, the little engraving that would leave a mark on his finger whenever he took the ring off. Hannibal's had the same concept, but his image was the disembodied antler of an elk.

"I still don't get what we're waiting for." Will didn't understand why they didn't just go ahead and get it done. It's not like they would invite anyone to some big celebration.

"The right outfit." Hannibal cupped Will's face and kissed him. Happy energy built up inside Will like lightning, and he waved one of his hands to get some of it out. The other was too busy holding onto the back of Hannibal's neck. His heart was warm, and he felt complete.

"There," Hannibal said, slightly breathless. "Now we're married."

"Are you gonna buy that dress?"

"I don't think so. I've gotten everything I need out of it." He wrapped his arms around Will in a tender hug, Will's favorite kind of affection. Will leaned into him, smelling the cologne that had become such a comfort.

"Now go let the nice lady make some alterations for you." Hannibal playfully shoved his shoulder. "You're getting that suit."

June 26- Questioning

Chapter Notes

this contains NSFW btw

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"See?"

Will couldn't catch his breath. He was drenched in blood, his eyes wide and wild, and his chest was heaving up and down with such fervor that his surroundings spiraled. A chill ran down his arms.

"See?" Garrett Jacob Hobbs stared at him from across the kitchen, a smirk rising on his face before his eyes went cold and dead and he collapsed onto the tile—

"See?"

No. He was here. He was still blood-soaked, still wild, still undeniably afraid, but he was with Hannibal. He was in the present, so monumentally different from the past.

He had so much blood on his face that even his eyelids were tacky. If he blinked, his eyelashes would lace together and he would forever be blind. The stench crept up his nose. It was like rotting copper. Something was rising in the back of his throat— it could have been bile or a laugh, vomit or a sob. He half expected to retch up a black, writhing entity, his intestines replaced with decay and the ink Hannibal used to write his words. The carefully crafted words that changed him.

He stared at Hannibal, and all of these disgusting feelings faded. His wedding band was noticeably cold on his finger.

"This is all I ever wanted for you, Will." Hannibal glanced down at Will's lips before averting his gaze entirely. "For both of us."

They had slain the dragon together. They had moved like practiced dancers and defeated a seemingly unstoppable foe. Will felt like he could move mountains. He was powerful. Calm. He saw the death not as a heinous crime against someone vulnerable; rather, it was an ethereal thing that he and Hannibal had experienced together. Accomplishment flowed through him.

He let out a shaky breath. He didn't know if he was laughing or crying. "..It's beautiful," he whispered.

Hannibal exhaled. Will couldn't help but move towards him, and soon there was a pair of warm arms around him and he was leaning into Hannibal's soft shirt. He still couldn't bring himself to blink, so he stared into the distance with no focus in mind. He only noticed fabric on his right cheek and unbearable pain on his left. It was gnawing away at his skin, it was so painful, but the right...oh, the right. He could feel Hannibal's heart beating against his ear.

Will gripped Hannibal's sleeve with white knuckles. His hands shook with the force. Hannibal's hands moved up and down his body, strategically avoiding the stab wound on his side. The embrace was intimate— so intimate it made his spine tingle. He smelled wine.

Is Hannibal..in love with me?

Yes.

Wait. No, no, wait.

This wasn't what he wanted. This wasn't what he was supposed to want. He had never been this entwined with another man before, mentally or physically. This was a form of connection that only lovers had. He didn't love Hannibal. He didn't love men, in general. Or anyone.

Hannibal's fingers were gripping Will's chin, tilting Will's head up.

Hannibal kissed him.

Will completely melted into the gentle touch, pressing their lips together and caressing the back of Hannibal's neck. There was an excitement in his belly, a peace that came over him that he'd never experienced before. He'd never felt this way with Molly, or Alana, or Margot — all he could think about was this kiss. His worries slipped away. He was finally content.

Hannibal stopped to murmur into Will's mouth. "You're beautiful, my love."

Will flushed, and the realization of what they were doing struck him. "Wait," he said, jerking back. "No. I'm sorry, I can't do this."

"What?"

"I don't..I don't love men. I've never kissed a man." He swallowed. "This isn't what I want."

"You don't wish to pursue romance with me?"

"I only like women. I've only ever been with women. And I don't feel that way about you."

"It's very probable that you like women. But judging by that kiss..I wouldn't say that you don't want me." He cradled Will's right cheek in his rough palm. "You certainly reciprocated. That was a kiss filled with need."

"I don't like men!" He snapped and shook his head. "I'm not attracted to men."

"Why is that possibility such an issue?"

"It's not an issue. It's just..it's not true! I don't want you to see this as something that it's not."

Hannibal cocked his head slightly. "Do you want to know what I see?"

"You're going to tell me anyway."

"I see love in your eyes."

Will deflated.

"I see desire. An epiphany. But it is a love that you do not want to accept, because someone told you it was wrong." He kissed Will again, and when he pulled back Will nearly pitched forward with how far he'd been leaning in. His body wanted this. "Who told you it was wrong, love?"

The word made his insides shudder with delight. "I don't know what you're trying to say. No one told me anything."

"If that were the case, then I think another man's lips on yours," he delivered another short kiss, "would not be an issue. You would not be so quick to defend."

Do whatever the hell you want, but don't you ever come in here acting like that. You hear me? I'll beat your ass.

Look at that. Completely unnatural. They choose that, and then they want our babies? Just so they can take 'em in and recruit 'em?

You don't need no medicine. That stuff is for pansies. Go get some sun.

"My family." Will was sweating. No, he was crying. Salty tears ran into the cut on his face, making it scream out with red hot pain.

Hannibal pulled Will's head back onto his chest, stroking his hair. "Your own family," he said with a tinge of hatred. "Your own family rejected a part of you, and you repressed it. Oh, my dear.."

"I don't like men, Hannibal. I only like women." He said this, but he made no efforts to move away from Hannibal. In response, Hannibal kissed the top of his head.

"Do you?" He asked softly.

"I do." He was crying harder now. "I do."

"I believe you. But it does not have to be one or the other. You are allowed to like both."

"I'm not supposed to want this..."

"Because you were told not to."

"Dad said I was a—" He hiccuped. "Dad warned me to never act like a— like a— I can't say it. I don't want to say it." It was such an ugly word, the hard T at the end echoing in his ears long after he'd gone back to his bedroom. He told himself that he wasn't gay, but hearing that word from his father's mouth still hurt.

"You don't have to say it." Hannibal brushed the soaked hair off of Will's forehead. "Sweet Will...no one accepted this aspect of yourself."

"There were Confederate flags outside my house. On my porch."

"That's abhorrent. I'm so sorry."

"But I know I'm not gay, because I've never liked a man before."

"Because you were told not to. You were raised with fear instilled in you."

"Don't go all psychiatrist on me. We're not in love!"

"Stop saying these things. Please stop." Even Hannibal seemed frustrated now. "I have loved you for four years. I cannot have you turn me away now! Not after all we've been through. You really want to deny it, after the way you dove into that kiss like you'd been craving it for years?!"

"Give me a fucking break, okay?! Jesus!" Will shouted, pushing himself away from Hannibal's comforting grip. "I've been fucking stabbed, I'm a murderer, I just realized that I've wasted years of my life in a marriage I don't give a shit about, and," he stopped, unable to look Hannibal in the eyes, "...I can't love you, Hannibal. If I do, then that's it."

He turned towards the edge of the cliff, staring out at the sea with a dazed look in his eyes. He watched the waves churning, feeling that ever-present human urge to simply fling himself into the darkness. "I'll lose this five year battle." His voice was hollow. "And I won't be the same."

"It would mean your retaliation would all be for nothing."

"It would mean that I'm not who I thought I was."

Hannibal put a hand on his shoulder. "Let's go inside," he said softly.

Will moved outside of himself, the two of them leaning against each other as they walked into the house. He was wearing someone else's skin; everything was too big, too clumsy. Hannibal leaned over and kissed him gently on his uninjured cheek.

"I love you, okay?" He murmured, to which Will nodded. "We can talk about this later, but..please hear me say that I love you. And that's not going to change."

"Why?" Will replied, turning his face towards him.

Hannibal did not answer at first. "For the same reasons you love me," he finally said, making Will immediately avert his gaze.

"I told you—"

"I'm going to take care of you," Hannibal promised. "You are in safe hands now."

Will closed his eyes as relief flushed through his veins. He never realized how much time he'd spent taking care of others. He'd never realized how much he wanted someone to take care of him.

They did not have to speak for a little while. They were comfortable reveling in each other's silence, instead sharing careful glances and gentle touches. They cleaned each other's wounds and wiped the blood from their skin, and Will let his hand linger on Hannibal's olive complexion. His skin was smooth, warm, his stomach folding into small rolls when he leaned forward to kiss Will. They wore nothing but their boxers.

Will's stab wound was saved for last. He glanced down at it with a grimace. "Give it to me in words I'll understand."

"This is going to hurt like a bitch." Hannibal smirked, prepping a cloth with gauze and disinfectant. "But you'll be alright."

"Get it over with."

"Tell me something interesting," Hannibal requested, hovering the cloth over Will's wound. He could imagine the sting before the liquid even touched him. "Doesn't have to be important. Something you find interesting."

"There are about two hundred different dog breeds in America alone."

"Fascinating." His tone didn't match the sentiment, and within seconds Will was immersed in a fiery pit of Hell that he would never escape from. His torso throbbed as he winced in agony. "Keep talking."

"I had a dream..about you. Once," he rasped.

That perked Hannibal up. "Well, now I'm intrigued."

"Jesus, it keeps getting worse."

"Don't focus on it."

"Okay. Fuck. Okay." He sighed. "I don't know. It was weird. It was during my honeymoon with Molly, in Cuba. I woke up in the resort bedroom alone. Lots of sun streaming in. Someone was in the kitchen, clamoring around and humming. I assumed it was Molly, but then.. shit," he winced, "when I got up and went in there, it was you. And..and you just smiled. And I smiled back. You were making us breakfast. I sat down at the counter, and you gave me a cup of coffee just the way I like it, and I was happy."

"In the dream, were we together in a romantic sense? Be truthful."

"..Yes. It was our honeymoon instead."

"How did that dream make you feel?"

"Cozy. Warm." He gasped as Hannibal dabbed at another spot with the rag. "When I woke up later, it was kind of the same thing. Sunbeams, Cuba, noises in the kitchen. I didn't want to get up for a little while, because..because I knew it wouldn't be you in there."

"Were you dissatisfied with Molly?"

"We were both dissatisfied, I think." He shrugged. "We cared about each other. I just don't think our hearts were in the right places. She was mourning her ex-husband— he died right when they were really settling in— and I was..whatever the hell I was."

"You lost someone too, Will. You lost someone that was important to you."

Will didn't object.

"You were mourning, as well. Tell me what you were mourning." His voice turned gentler, more understanding of Will's plight. Will closed his eyes and thought.

"Our conversations. Having a friend. Having someone to confide in."

"Mhm." It didn't seem to be the answer he was looking for.

"Learning things about myself. Having someone who accepted me for who I was, and didn't expect me to be someone I wasn't." His voice wavered slightly.

"Keep going."

"That encompasses all of it, I think—"

"Keep going, Will."

"Your voice," he blurted. The thoughts that he'd stored away were now rising to the surface, and his answers from before were now worth nothing at all. They were non-answers. They weren't intimate enough. "The way you touched me. Took care of me." He felt tears brimming in his eyes. "Your meals. Your eyes. Your smile."

"There it is," Hannibal replied, satisfied.

"You looked at me like I was something magnificent. And when you carried me, from Mason's farm..I woke up, you know. There was a moment when I woke up, and I was weak, but I felt you there and that made me feel better. And you hurt me, but I was still drawn to you.

"You let me get sick. You framed me. You betrayed me and stabbed me and cut my head open and tried to have me killed God knows how many times. Why do I understand? Why do

I forgive you? Why do I love you so much?"

It was then he realized Hannibal hadn't been touching his wound for a long time. There was gauze wrapped around his torso, and Hannibal was staring intently at him, his job finished. When had he finished?

"Will." His eyes were wide. This shock was something unfamiliar. "I.."

"I guess it's because I gave you the same treatment. I betrayed the hell out of you. Tried to have you killed. Rejected you. Turned the whole FBI against you." He buried his face in his hands. "And I don't know if the whole encephalitis thing even matters, because if you'd helped me heal, then you'd just be building even more trust for you to break later on. And I'd be even more mad." He knew he was blabbering now, but spitting out everything on his mind was the only way to distract himself.

"You know how it is." He looked back up at Hannibal, not caring about the tears running down his face. "How long did it take for you to sew your person suit? Because it took me a long fucking time," he spat. "I spent so much time building it that I lost myself in it. I thought that the suit was who I actually was, and my true self was just some ugly creature that needed to be pushed down. But then you came along and you ripped my person suit clean off, and you called me beautiful. And it felt so good."

He let out a loud groan, doubling over and clenching his hands into fists. His side pulsated with pain. "This really is love, isn't it?" He asked. "I love you, Hannibal. I love you. I love you.."

He began to sob, wetting the bandages on his face. He didn't care. Those could be replaced; this moment could not.

Hannibal reached for him, wrapping his arms around him and resting Will's head on his shoulder. Will cried into his bare shoulder, smelling his skin and feeling his warmth.

"There. Isn't that so much better?" Hannibal asked gently.

"You know from experience, don't you?"

"I, too, had a long battle with myself. I spent decades constructing my facade, and you," he held on tightly, "tore it all down. I fought it for a long while, but then I surrendered. I realized that I love you."

"I don't want to surrender. I never give up."

"And it exhausts you."

"I won't be myself anymore."

"Yes, you will. I am a mere reflection of yourself, Will. Loving me means loving the part of you that you've stowed away. That part that craves violence, that enjoys the power that comes with it. The only thing you will throw away is your exhausting disguise. Are you capable of that?"

"I want to stop hiding."

"Then stop."

Will paused before lifting his head. He gazed into Hannibal's eyes, giving one hard blink to squeeze out all of the tears, and then he leaned in to press their foreheads together.

"I love you," he breathed. "I love you."

Any words Hannibal had were cut off by Will kissing him deeply on the lips. Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will, nearly knocking them down onto the tile floor. Will winced.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry," Hannibal quickly said. "Let me take us somewhere more comfortable."

Will took his hand, loving the feeling of his calloused palm. His hands were warm, blistered, nails jagged from scrambling up the cliff side. There was still blood on them.

He led them into a dark bedroom and pulled Will onto the mattress. Will straddled him, letting Hannibal splay his hands out on his bare back. Hannibal's fingers ran down the curve of his spine, sending goosebumps down him.

"Will," Hannibal murmured, "I want you to ride me."

Will turned uncomfortably warm. "I..I've never done that before. I've only had fingers. Plugs. Not something like this."

"This is so much better than fingers." He smirked. "You will see. My cock inside of you..you won't be able to get enough of it."

"Tell me more." Will was on the cusp of an erection, but he needed that final motivation.

"I'm going to fuck you," Hannibal hissed in his ear. "You'll be begging me for more all night."

Will bit his bottom lip. Hearing Hannibal curse so freely did something to him— it aroused him. He'd never been truly aroused by a man.

"Do it."

"I'll be right back." Hannibal shifted. "In the meantime, take those boxers off. I want to see your cock."

He went back towards the bathroom, leaving Will alone. Will stripped, wrapping his hand around his cock and stroking. He couldn't hold back a small moan, closing his eyes as he thought of what Hannibal was about to do. He trusted Hannibal to make him feel wonderful, more so than he ever had with his female partners. This was about to be a completely new feeling.

God, he was so ready.

He hadn't even noticed Hannibal's return until he heard him kneel in front of him on the floor. He put his own hand over Will's.

"You must save some energy for me," he said. He moved forward and opened his mouth, closing his lips around Will. In moments, Will was gripping the bedsheets and throwing his head back, lip quivering with the desperate need to moan. Hannibal was so enthusiastic, so good at this.

"Oh, my God. Oh, please.." This wasn't enough. He needed more. "Please, fuck me. Fuck me hard, Hannibal."

"I like it when you're needy." Hannibal got back on the bed, opening the jar of Vaseline he'd gotten from the bathroom. "I like it when you beg me." He kneeled over Will, looming like a shadow.

"I can't wait any longer. Fuck me! Please."

"We have to prepare first." Hannibal held out the jar. "I want you to wet your first three fingers. All over."

Will obeyed, slathering them in gel. It felt disgusting, hellish for the senses, but he knew he was about to feel so much better.

"Spread your legs. Then stretch yourself. One at a time. It helps if you relax."

Will tried his best to sink into the mattress, to not let his muscles tense up. He started with his pointer, sliding it inside and inhaling sharply at the feeling. Hannibal watched him hungrily.

By now, the pain from his wound was easy to ignore. As he inserted another finger in, stretching himself out, he imagined Hannibal thrusting in and out of him, and he wanted to cry out. He was dizzy for this. He wanted it so badly.

"Good boy."

The words made Will's blood start to buzz in his ears. Hannibal noticed how much pleasure it gave him and smiled to himself, noting it for later.

Third finger. He rotated his hand slightly, rimming the hole and getting used to the width. It felt easier now.

"Perfect. You will be rewarded for this."

Will whimpered as he removed his fingers. Hannibal grabbed onto him and rolled over, now planting Will on the top. Will saw his cock, hard and ready, and his mouth watered. He sat up taller, preparing himself.

"Now you just hold still for a moment." Hannibal stroked his cock with more gel. "I'll take care of the first one."

Will did what he was told. He felt the tip of Hannibal's cock grazing his hole, a lone finger searching to stretch him out, and then—

He felt it slowly sink inside of him. Waves of pleasure came over him, so great that he saw stars. His eyes fluttered closed and he let out a soft moan, to which Hannibal pet his sweat-soaked back.

"Good, Will. Good."

A spike of dull pain suddenly shot through him, and he winced. Hannibal noticed, and he applied pressure on Will's back to pull him down. They were practically laying on top of each other now.

"Relax," Hannibal whispered to him. "Relax, and the pain will subside." He continued to rub Will's back. "It's meant to be enjoyable."

Will sighed, loving the sound of Hannibal's voice in his ear. The pain lowered in its intensity, and he felt comfortable enough to keep moving down.

It reached his prostate. He gasped, overwhelmed by the ecstasy of it. Chills ran down his whole body, followed by a comforting warmth and the irresistible desire for more.

"Good," Hannibal said again. "Now, you're in control here. Move up and down how you wish."

Will sat back up and began to straighten his legs. Hannibal's cock moved outward, running across the sensitive skin of his hole and making Will dizzy. He moved back down, desperate for the contact with his prostate again.

He began to find his rhythm. He moved up and down as a faster pace, his thigh muscles working, their hips colliding. Hannibal moaned with pleasure, which gave Will more motivation to continue.

"Keep fucking me," he rasped. "Do it how you normally do."

Hannibal took hold of Will's hips and pushed him down onto his back, pinning his wrists to the bed. He bent down to nip at the skin on Will's neck, all the while thrusting in and out with animalistic excitement.

"Fuck, Hannibal!"

He was completely lost inside Will, each thrust teasing the prostate before sliding back out. Will was about to explode, the orgasm building inside of him. He opened his eyes and saw Hannibal's erect cock moving in and out of him, and the sight aroused him even further.

A colossal ringing in his ears began, white creeping around the edges of his vision. He had never felt this good in his life.

They came at the same time. Hannibal was still moving when it happened, so he felt come snake inside of him, a part of Hannibal given to him forever. Will released onto Hannibal's

thighs as well as the bedsheets.

Will collapsed, exhausted and exhilarated. He breathed heavily, and he finally began to notice the thin sheen of sweat that covered both of them. It was uncomfortable, hot and sticky, but he never wanted to leave this bed.

"Oh.." He cried with residual lust. "Oh, Hannibal. Oh..wow." He was quivering, his hole throbbing slightly with discomfort.

Hannibal pulled him up by the shoulders, hugging him, before laying them both back down with their heads by the headboard this time. He spooned Will, running his hands along the divot between his hips and his thighs, occasionally stroking Will's cock. He kissed up and down Will's face and neck.

"You did very well," he told Will. "You're a lovely partner."

"I'm new to all of this.."

"Did you enjoy it?"

"Oh, yes. God, yes."

Hannibal smiled against his skin. "Good."

"That was better than anything else I've ever had." There were still parts of his body, his thighs in particular, that were trembling. "I liked having you inside of me. And you really wanted to fuck me."

"You have a lovely body. Soft, supple, muscular." He breathed in Will's scent, which certainly was all musk and sweat right now. "And I've spent so long chasing after you. It excites me that you're here. In my arms. Here to stay."

Will turned to face him. He nuzzled underneath Hannibal's chin. "I love you. I'm not afraid to love you. I can't be afraid anymore. I love you."

"Hearing that.." He trailed off. Will caught a vulnerability in his next breaths, in the way his voice wavered. "Hearing that means the world, my love."

"I love you."

"I love you."

For the first time ever, Will fell asleep in Hannibal's arms. He would do so every night for the rest of his life.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for the love on this work!!! I'm very happy to contribute to pride month :) love y'all

Follow my Instagram @therealsolomon.writer

Day 30- Aromantic

Chapter Notes

Soooo I will be going into surgery on the 28th, and I wanted to get the aro fic published before then since I probably won't feel up to it on the 30th. So here's an early gift!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Beverly Katz is working hard, searching desperately through the files she has gathered on the Tooth Fairy case. She is looking for clues, patterns, any kind of tie that could be useful to finding the killer. She feels an extreme sense of duty here, of urgency, but she can't place why.

So much urgency, in fact, that she's in the quiet forensics lab after closing time. Alongside her sits Will Graham, and he appears to be slightly agitated. Beverly has noticed.

"I agree, by the way," she says, not looking up at him. "You shouldn't be here."

Will raises his eyebrows. "You don't think?"

"You should be with your wife. Your kid. Jack is being completely insensitive to your trauma."

"I chose to be here."

"Because he guilted you. He shouldn't have ever asked you in the first place."

Will shrugs. "I want to help people, Bev. We haven't seen a case this severe since...you know."

She's never heard him say his name, not since the night he was arrested.

"Yeah, I know." Beverly turns something over in her mind, trying to decide whether or not to tell Will what she'd done. Fuck it, she decides, it's long in the past.

"You told me, when you were in the hospital, that I should stay away from him," she starts, watching Will perk up out of the corner of her eye. "But I didn't listen to you."

Will's face grows even more irritated. "You didn't? Bev, you could have—"

"I went to his house. He wasn't there. I pulled up across the street, but before I got out of the car I felt this weird sense of guilt. That, and foreboding. Like something was seriously wrong— or it was about to go wrong. I sat in the front seat of my car for probably half an hour trying to decide what to do."

"Jesus Christ—" Will rubs his temples.

"I didn't go in. I saw a pair of headlights behind me, coming from far away, and I got the hell out of there."

"Were you going to break in? What were you expecting to do?"

"I wanted so badly to find something. I wanted you to be right." She smirks. "But it turns out you were. You were always right."

Will pauses for a moment, brow furrowed in thought, before sighing deeply. "I don't like being right," he mutters.

"Because he was your friend?"

"Yeah."

Beverly had visited Will in the hospital nearly every day as he recovered from his stab wound. On the good days, the days that Will would find the strength to open his eyes, he would cry until he fell back to sleep. On the bad days, he never woke up at all.

"I hope you don't forgive him, Will. I hope that you don't try to justify how badly he hurt you. You could have died."

"You heard the report, Bev. The slice was executed with such surgical precision, such deliberate placement. It couldn't have been incidental. He wanted to hurt me; he didn't want to kill me."

"He killed Abigail. He sliced up that poor little girl and left her to die, just like her father did."

That leaves Will silent. He closes his eyes.

"I'll be right back," he finally says, standing up and sliding his spiral notebook towards her. "I've got a few pages on the Tooth Fairy. Should be that page and then two more after. See if we're coming together."

"Gotcha."

Beverly watches him walk out the door and out of view, and then she immediately starts to flip through the entire notebook. She's nothing if not a little too nosy for her own good.

Towards the middle of the book, in between dozens of blank pages on either side, is what Beverly can only see as a shrine.

There are many news clippings of Hannibal, glued in near each other. Pictures, descriptions of his crimes, mentions of Will himself. Will's clock sketch, likely the original one, is glued on the opposite page. The paper is yellowed and the image is blurred, either from water or tears.

The two pages after that are a madman's ramblings. Will writing like he was running out of time. There are bulleted lists, sketches, paragraphs of unrelated thoughts. But then, as she keeps reading, Beverly sees that they are in fact related.

-Hannibal couldn't bring himself to kill me

-He couldn't leave without me

-I hurt him. I didn't want to. I wish I hadn't.

-He held my face and I thought he was going to kiss me. <u>WHY</u>

I can't ignore the way he looks at me and as much as I don't want it to be true I think he is obsessed with me. i think he's sick and obsessed but so am I. I'm writing this right now. I have to be crazy.

Why is he doing this to me. Why can't he just leave me alone. I wake up screaming and my wife is tired of it. I don't want her anymore. I don't know how to tell her that.

You've ruined my life you sick piece of shit!!!! I hate you so much but I think

What I wouldn't do for one more night of dinner at your table. Towards the end, you finally treated me like an equal. Like you knew that we'd both hurt each other in the same way. Even Steven. I still feel you holding my hands.

i love you

Beverly is biting on the knuckle of her thumb to keep her hand from trembling. She blinks hard, as if the images in front of her can be erased that quickly.

Will isn't stupid. He wouldn't just give this book to her if he didn't want her to see the pages in the middle.

It's almost like he wanted to warn her. A little push, telling her to stay away from him, too.

"Please don't tell Jack," Will suddenly says, standing in the open doorway. He doesn't move to come into the room. "Please, Bev, please don't tell..." He trails off and begins to cry softly. "Bev.."

"Hey, Bev. Earth to Beverly."

Bev's head snaps up from where she's staring into her drink, distracted from the memory of the past. It was a week and a half after the incident in the lab, and now Will was gone. She'll never see him again, she realizes, and she blinks back tears.

"Sorry," she says to Zeller, sighing deeply. “Sorry. It’s just a lot to think about.”

“You didn’t notice any signs?”

Beverly suddenly hates the tone of his voice, like Will is some sort of such entertainment. Like he wasn't a real friend, a real coworker.

"No," she snaps, "I didn't. No one could have predicted something like this."

"I feel like I missed something," Price chimes in, taking a swig of beer. "Didn't Hannibal frame him for multiple murders? And wasn't Will married? What happened between then and now?"

"We don't know if they actually ran away together." Beverly shrugs. "Hannibal could have kidnapped him."

"Bev." Zeller raises an eyebrow. "You read the report. We all did. Hannibal was in cuffs around the wrists and ankles, a straight jacket, leather restraints on a dolly, and a solid face mask. He's not Superman. There's no chance in hell that he could have gotten out on his own, even with a car crash." He crosses his arms. "Will helped him. They were the only two in that crash that weren't pronounced dead on the scene."

She hates that he's right. She chugs the rest of her beer.

"And we don't know if they're dead or alive?" Price asks.

"There's really no evidence either way." Bev answers instantly; she knows every little detail about the case. "Francis Dolarhyde is dead. He was going after them, for sure, and someone killed him— it's either one of them or both. There's blood on the edge of the cliff, nowhere near Dolarhyde, then blood spilling down the side of the cliff. Blood on one of the rocks on the shore, and in the sand. Blood on one of the trails leading back up to the house.

"We don't know what any of it means. It could mean that one of them is dead and the other lived to escape. It could be that they both lived, and they both just spilled blood all over the place. Or both of them are dead, and all that blood is theirs or Dolarhyde's. We can't test it. We could assume the blood on the side is from them, when they fell, and the blood on the trail could have dripped over at any point. That scene was complete soup."

"So basically," Price concludes, "we don't have anything."

"Exactly."

"And Jack's retiring."

They sit in solemn silence for a moment, staring at the table they occupied in the noisy bar. They can ignore their problems here. They can ignore the fact that Jack Crawford, one of the only people with the motivation to keep hunting for Will and Hannibal— to find out the truth— is retiring.

"FBI is going to say they're dead, you know," Zeller says. "That's what makes them look the best. And if we do any kind of secret digging, we'll probably lose our jobs."

"I didn't plan on doing any secret digging," Beverly replies. "Did you?"

“Nothing about it seems right. I know you were close with him, Bev, but…he’s not innocent. I don’t think he ever has been. And I think he and Hannibal are equally evil.”

The way he emphasizes the word close sends an uncomfortable feeling through Bev’s stomach. She shakes her head adamantly. “Hey, wait. Close? Close how?”

“You were friends,” Price says, at the exact same time that Zeller says, “You had a crush on him.”

Both Beverly and Katz turn to Zeller with surprise. “What?” Beverly asks.

Zeller put his hands up in mock surrender. “Okay, guess I’m wrong? I thought you had a thing for Will this whole time.”

“You’re a creep. My only love is science.” Beverly rolls her eyes.

“You never liked him like that?”

“I don’t like anyone. Neither did he. That’s why our friendship worked so well; we were both aro.”

“What’s an arrow?”

Price cackles. The sound is infectious, and Beverly finds herself laughing too. Zeller turns pink as he realizes that there’s a hilarious joke he’s not in on.

“What? Did I mishear?”

“Aro, Z. As in aromantic?”

“Still lost.”

“You took Latin in high school, Brian. Come on,” Price coaxes, “what’s the prefix a- mean?”

“Without!” He’s red now.

“Aromantic. Without romance. I do not feel romantic attraction.”

“Ohhhhh,” Zeller exhales. “Never?”

“I haven’t so far in my life.”

“I wondered why you never talk about it,” Price remarks, “because I didn’t think that you weren’t having any luck. You’re too much of a catch.”

Beverly scoffs, smiling. “Whatever.”

“How’s that feel?” Zeller asked.

“I dunno. I don’t look at anyone and have those little butterflies in my stomach and want to hug and kiss them. I can see myself in a stable relationship, but that would be more like deep friendship or a life partner to me, not a romantic couple thing.”

“Huh. And Will was the same way?”

“He told me about it one day, back before he even started having sessions with Hannibal. He liked that he found someone who felt the same way.”

“Then what would be the point in running away with Hannibal? If they weren’t interested in each other. That’s what the media seems to think— that they were lovers.”

“I don’t know. I think he’s definitely been manipulated.”

“Could Hannibal have convinced him they were in love?”

“That’s what I think happened, yeah. That, or they just can’t live without each other. Maybe it’s for the best that they stick together and leave the rest of us alone.”

Another silence. Bev takes another drink.

“I never knew you were..aro,” Zeller says. “I hope you weren’t trying to hide it because you thought we’d be weird about it.”

“Nah. Just never crossed my mind. Just like one of you guys could be gay and we’d never know.”

Zeller blushes. “I’m not gay!”

“You know, they say one in three people are gay now.” Beverly grins. “I’m not gay, and Jimmy isn’t gay—“

“I am, though.”

Zeller and Beverly both swivel towards him.

“What?”

Price smiles. “Surprise?”

A loud whimper escapes Will’s mouth as horrific pain shoots through his torso. “Fuck. Ow.. God, it hurts.”

“It’s okay, sweetheart.” Hannibal kisses him on the cheek. “I’m right here.”

Will is sitting on Hannibal’s lap, feeling his warm chest against his back. It feels lovely, and he focuses on that to distract from the pain of his injury.

Will knows that he has to tell Hannibal the truth, but the truth is a scary thing. He doesn't want Hannibal to leave him for it.

He waits until they're in bed. Hannibal is laying on top of him, their bodies pressed together. He is kissing Will on the neck, and Will splays his hands out against the man's back. He feels their thighs pressed together, their soft bellies, and he reaches out to cradle Hannibal's head.

He feels so loved. He feels so needed.

He must tell the truth.

"Hannibal," he whispers into his ear.

"Will." Hannibal says it with so much adoration. Warmth flushes through Will.

"I..I've never felt this way before," he admits. "I've never been in a relationship like this."

"That's okay, Will. The world was simply waiting for us to come together."

"No, I'm..I'm aromantic. I don't have romantic attraction towards anyone." Beverly had taught him that word. He likes it.

Hannibal pauses. "Not even Molly?"

"I loved the idea of Molly. I didn't..I just wanted to look normal. I couldn't stay alone if people wanted me to seem…like I healed. I was supposed to heal, after you."

"You never once experienced love? For her?"

"No."

"Or Alana? Margot?"

"Sexual. Not romantic."

"I see." Hannibal kisses his ear. "You must have been a very good actor, Will. Three years of being with her, and you didn't even love her."

Will lets out a small laugh. "I guess so."

"How do you feel about this?" His voice is heavier now, more intense. "Is this too much?"

"No, no, not at all. It's just confusing." He tightens his grip on Hannibal. He doesn't ever want him to let go. "I've never loved anyone. But I want you more than anything. I need you."

"I never thought of this as romantic."

"…You didn't?"

Hannibal considers his words. “Have you ever heard stories, Will, of people who were thoroughly lost until they found faith?”

“Everyone has, yeah. They lose their way, and then their god is the only thing that gives them hope.”

“You are a God that I worship.” Hannibal holds Will’s face in his hands, gazing into his eyes. Will melts under that stare, those warm brown eyes that can see into every part of him. “I doubt that those lost people feel romantic attraction to their god. Don’t you agree?”

“Right. It’s something else entirely.”

“Exactly.” Hannibal smiles softly. It flushes out any bad feelings that Will had. “I love my god. Loving him is a religious experience. It has awoken something beautiful inside of me.”

“I love you.”

“We are soulmates, my love.” Hannibal kisses Will’s forehead and begins to stroke his bare chest. “We are one and the same. We, Will, are much more than a romantic relationship. We are not merely dating. We are bound for life. Don’t you feel the same?”

“Absolutely.” Will exhales, relieved to have it all put into words. The confusion, the dilemma of loving Hannibal while also being aromantic— it’s all gone. He feels like things finally make sense. “Thank you, Hannibal.”

“Thank *you*.”

Will gently pushes Hannibal off of him and onto his back. He lay his own body on top now, this time on his back. Hannibal cradles his belly and his throat, moaning in Will’s ear.

“You and me, forever.”

“Forever.”

Chapter End Notes

There will be two more chapters after this! Non-binary and questioning. Thanks for all the love

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!